

FAIRWAY ESTATES

A revival for 'eyesore' wall

■ The great wall of Fairway Estates and neighboring areas has been repainted, thanks to a slew of volunteers. The celebration kicked off Team Metro's P.R.I.D.E. Week.

BY GERAD TEAGUE

Special to the Miami Herald

For years, the 1.5-mile wall separating Southwest 152nd Street from the Fairway Estates development in Perrine had been widely considered a "blight" and an "eyesore." So much so that volunteers from the community, with assistance from Miami-Dade County's Team Metro and other organizations, took the initiative to repaint the 48,000-square-foot wall themselves.

On Saturday, many of those who supported the effort met near Jackson South Community Hospital for the project's official unveiling.

The presentation coincided with the start of Team Metro's P.R.I.D.E. week, a time "dedi-

cated to 'cleaning up' — both literally and metaphorically — [Miami-Dade's] neighborhoods," according to the county's website. P.R.I.D.E. stands for Partnership, Responsibility, Involvement, Duty and Enforcement, all factors in building a community.

The event kicked off with a prayer from Pastor Ronald Smith of the Community Bible Baptist Church, who spoke of the project as a "symbol of hope for our youth."

Miami-Dade County Commission Vice Chair Dennis Moss was the featured speaker. Moss lauded the volunteers' efforts and hailed the restoration as a model of community partnership and revitalization.

"I know this wall has been a big eyesore, and a concern for many, many years. And so, today, we have been able to work together to get it painted," he said. "It looks tremendous, and it's going to be a great asset to this particular community."



PHOTOS BY MARIBER CODINA FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

NEW LOOK: Saturday's Miami-Dade County P.R.I.D.E. Week event commemorated the completion of the painting of the 1.5-mile long, 31,000-square-foot wall along the north side of the community. Pictured are the before and after photographs of the wall.

Various speakers took to the podium to give thanks and recognize those who were particularly influential in the undertaking.

Robert Holley, on the board of directors of the Fairway Estates Homeowners Association, was praised. A resident of Fairway since 1976, Holley, 65, called the wall a "barometer of the community."

Holley also was involved the last time the wall was painted in 1992. After it barely survived Hurricane Andrew, the wall gradually fell into disrepair, serving as an environment for mold and mildew for more than a decade.

Eventually, according to Holley, the community went to Commissioner Moss three years ago to explore options to address the problem. Moss was reluctant to take action at first because, legally, each resident owns the section of wall adjacent to their home and there was concern about setting a precedent condoning county infringement on private property.

The desire for action eventually superseded concerns and Team Metro, a county agency that focuses on community outreach and beautification, stepped in to spearhead the project.

"Team Metro, I think, adopted that [policy] county-wide," Holley said. "They weren't going to worry about all of the bureaucracy."

Metro organizers predicted the wall could be pressure-

SMART BOX

P.R.I.D.E. EVENTS

Here is a list of the rest of the week's Team Metro Neighborhood P.R.I.D.E. events:

TODAY:

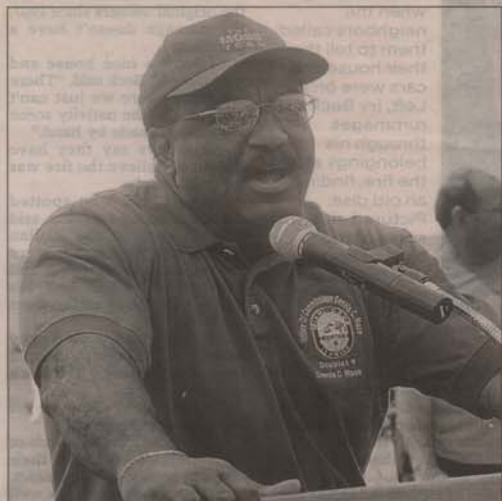
- **Community Habilitation Center Plant Sale**, 8 a.m., 11609 SW 88th St.
- **Team Metro Direct Sales Day at Costco**, 9 a.m., 9191 SW 137th Ave.
- **Tamiami Trail Community Clean Up**, 9 a.m., Tamiami Trail between Southwest 147th and 150th avenues.
- **Butterfly Garden Unveiling**, 10 a.m., Mays Middle School, 11700 SW 216th St.
- **Fiesta at the Comedores**, noon, 1401 SW 107th Ave.
- **Howard Community Housing Information Fair**, 6 p.m., St. John's Missionary Baptist Church, 8819 SW 216th Ter.

FRIDAY:

- **CSX Railroad Clean-Up**, 10 a.m., Southwest 69th Street and 21st Avenue.
- **Team Metro Kendall Neighborhood Family Night**, 6 p.m., El Rey Jesus Church, 9353 SW 152nd Ave.

SATURDAY:

- **Chair Martinez's Third Annual Easter Food Distribution**, 10 a.m., Bent Tree Park, Southwest 139th Avenue and 47th Street.
- **Richmond Heights/Perrine Community Career Fair**, 11 a.m., Sgt. Joseph Delancy Park, 14450 Boggs Dr.



FEATURED SPEAKER: Dennis Moss, Miami-Dade county commissioner for District 9, was the featured speaker at the unveiling of the newly painted wall separating Southwest 152nd Street from the Fairway Estates development. Moss said the wall was "going to be a great asset to this particular community."

washed, primed, and painted over in four weekends. Holley was skeptical, since he recalled the 1992 repainting as a five-month long "struggle." "I told [Team Metro] that there's no way they're going to get this done in four weekends," he said. "The difference this time was the resources and man-

power that Metro was able to devote, according to Holley. He cited the legion of volunteers from the Miami Service Corps, local police departments, and, in particular, area schools who pitched in. "The miracle, again, was the kids," he said. "Forty or 50 kids show up, it makes a huge difference."